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# Soviet disinformation fed to African unions

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NAIROBI, Kenya — A report charging the CIA with scheming to take control of African trade unions is being mailed to unionists in a possible example of what analysts believe are "disinformation" campaigns carried out by the Soviet Union.

The report details an alleged CIA plot to remove the current leadership of the Organization of African Trade Union Unity, the umbrella group of African trade unions. Marked "confidential," the document carries only pseudonyms for its two authors, who write that they wish to remain anonymous "for obvious reasons."

But despite the "confidential" stamp, the report has been mailed to trade unionists and newspapers in both Africa and Europe.

The Kenya Times, the official daily owned by Kenya's only legal political party, was one of the papers on the authors' mailing list. The Times used the report at the end of

December for a front-page lead story headlined "CIA's bid to oust Akumu," referring to Dennis Akumu, the Kenyan secretary-general of the trade union group.

While U.S. officials normally do not comment on reports of American intelligence activities, the Kenya Times story brought an immediate denial from startled diplomats here, who branded it a "fabrication" and "disinformation."

The 15-page report goes into intricate details of international trade union politics involving the OATUU, the international confederation of free trade unions, and other organizations. Its main charge, though, is that the CIA is scheming to oust Mr. Akumu from his post with the trade union organization when it meets later this month.

According to the authors, the CIA wants Mr. Akumu out because he opposes U.S. policy toward South Africa and because he backed the removal of Israeli delegates from

the governing board of the International Labor Organization.

While the African labor movement might seem an unlikely arena for either CIA subversion or a Soviet disinformation campaign, the potential power of the unions in African politics is considerable. With most countries on the continent organized as one-party states, unions are frequently the only civilian power base outside the government.

According to the report, the CIA scheme, called "Operation Africa," has been to organize secret caucuses of African trade unionists in advance of the OATUU meeting.

The authors allege U.S. Embassy officials across the continent were offering airline tickets to African trade union leaders to attend one such meeting in Geneva in November.

One of those who is supposed to have been offered tickets and to have turned them down was Justus Mulei, secretary general of the Kenyan Central Organization of Trade Unions. Contacted yesterday, Mr.

Mulei dismissed the report as "nonsense."

It was also denied by George Dragnich, regional labor attache at the U.S. Embassy here. He complained that U.S. labor attaches don't have the funds to hand out airline tickets to Europe, even if they wanted to.

One observer familiar with African trade unions suggested that the purpose of the report, aside from embarrassing the United States, is to help Mr. Akumu win re-election to his post at the upcoming OATUU meeting. While Mr. Akumu has headed the organization since its inception 11 years ago, he is believed to be facing a serious challenge from a Ghanaian, A.M. Isifu, who is politically more centrist than Mr. Akumu.

In an appendix in the back of their report, the authors say they are South African students based at a London clearinghouse and meeting place called the Africa Centre. They say their sources of information include books by ex-CIA agent Philip Agee and the offices of the South African liberation movements, a term used to refer to the African National Congress, South-West Africa Peoples Organization and similar groups.